



MEMORANDUM

PSC

Agenda Item No. 8 (G)

TO: Honorable Chairperson Joe A. Martinez
and Members, Public Safety Committee

DATE: April 20, 2004

FROM: George M. Burgess
County Manager

SUBJECT: Follow-up Report on the
MDPD Records Bureau

At the January 13, 2004, Public Safety Committee meeting, Commissioner Heyman, in response to a report regarding the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) Records Bureau, requested that the Manager further review and explore ways to improve the delivery of services provided by the Department's Central Records Bureau (CRB). In particular, Commissioner Heyman requested that the department explore the possibility of a decentralized intake process. The following report was submitted to the members of the Public Safety Committee on March 2, 2004 and has been updated and placed on this agenda at Commissioner Heyman's request.

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

Public records requests include Offense/Incident Reports, Florida Traffic Crash Reports, and Police Clearance Letters which require a criminal history background check. Each of these records requires a different level of research, ranging from five minutes to twenty-four hours. In the absence of the advanced technology, research time is expected to increase, as the number of public records requests have increased.

Currently, public records requests are processed at the Central Records Bureau (CRB). Requests are also processed at district stations only if the individual has no criminal record. If a criminal record exists and copies of related reports are required, the request can only be processed at the CRB because district stations have limited public records.

Recommended Short-Term Solution

In order to improve service delivery to the public, a pilot program is being developed where all district stations will begin to accept (intake) all public records requests, even if they require extensive research. The district stations, when appropriate, will fax the requests to the CRB for processing. Upon completion, the CRB will contact the citizen so that they may pick up their request. The requests must be picked up at the CRB for payment purposes. This pilot program may not reduce the preparation time of the request, but it will provide a convenience to the customer. The pilot program will be evaluated and its effectiveness measured over a six-month period.

ATTRITION AT THE CENTRAL RECORDS BUREAU (CRB)

The CRB has 170 assigned civilian employees and is comprised of three sections each supervised by a Police Lieutenant. There are 191 total budgeted positions with an average vacancy rate of approximately 21 positions.

Historically, CRB has held a high vacancy rate as a result of personnel turnover. The high demands placed on the CRB staff, including twenty-four hour/seven day a week staffing to support MDPD and other police agencies and the high volume of workload created by requests from the public, causes employees to often seek other employment opportunities. CRB employees have

exercised their options for better hours and pay through promotions or transfers. A recent reclassification of Police Records Specialist position to Police Records Technician increasing the rate of pay has somewhat reduced the high turnover rate.

The current budgetary restraints on the department and consequently on the CRB have required further reductions in spending and ability to fill vacancies. Nevertheless, ten (10) vacancies identified as operationally significant have been filled effective March 15, 2004. The hiring of these 10 Police Records Technician (1)s should reduce delays in preparing records requests once the new personnel are fully trained.

EQUIPMENT


Currently, CRB staff manually retrieves requested data or employs the use of antiquated electronic data storage such as microfilm and microfiche. The current methods of document retrieval are time-consuming, inefficient and cause delays in providing the best service possible to citizens and the law enforcement community. There are eight reader printers on order to replace outdated equipment. This new equipment will reduce downtime caused by repairs or the ordering of scarce mechanical parts. The purchase of this new equipment though does not address the issue of the retrieval of data. Data retrieval significantly impacts the current decentralized public records process and the amount of time required to research each request.

Recommended Long-Term Solution

A viable long-term solution is the implementation of the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS). The EDMS of image filing allows for the capture, indexing, retrieval, editing, and annotation of all documents. Utilizing high-speed scanners, documents will be scanned at a rate of approximately 2,000 items per hour. The document is automatically transferred to the computer servers, which are manned by personnel who "index" the information into related databases. When retrieval of this data is requested, the information is easily queried from a desktop computer. The EDMS will further decentralize the process of retrieving public records by making reports available for dissemination at district stations. The EDMS would provide immediate access to public records, providing district stations with the ability to process each public records request regardless of the number of arrests associated with an individual and reduce delays in retrieval of data during research.

The estimated cost to fund EDMS is \$2.2 million dollars for equipment, back-file conversion, consultation, and storage and has been identified as a FY 2004-05 MDPD unfunded capital request. The MDPD will explore funding opportunities through various law enforcement grants to offset the cost of this project. Pending full funding availability for the EDMS project, MDPD is working with the Enterprise Technology Services Department (ETSD) in the acquisition of computers, servers, and scanners (\$250,000) that will immediately improve service delivery and will subsequently be used with the EDMS.

I am confident that the measures being implemented at MDPD's Central Records Bureau will address the concerns raised by Commissioner Heyman and greatly improve service delivery at the CRB.



ACM Susanne M. Torriente